

## Jacob Learned Two Sons Had Taken Revenge

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain why the sons of Jacob became so angry at the sin of Shechem against their sister. In this topic, we will see how two of the brothers took revenge on the entire city because of the sin of Shechem.

Genesis 34:18-19 says, “And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son. So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He *was* more honorable than all the household of his father.” The sons of Jacob had told Hamor and Shechem that in order for him to marry Dinah, after Shechem had raped her, they had to convince all of the men of the city to be circumcised. We see that the young man was eager to convince the men of the city to get circumcised immediately because he delighted in her. The word translated “delighted” means *to have emotional delight*. Shechem had strong emotional feelings for Dinah.

There is also a statement about the character of the family of Shechem. We are told that “He was more honorable than all the household of his father”. That statement does not mean that Shechem was an honorable young man. Rather it means that the rest of the household of Hamor was less honorable than Shechem. The Lord had told Abraham many years earlier, in Genesis 15:16, “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” In this verse, Abraham had completed his life, and Isaac, who was not even born at the time the Lord spoke to his father, was now approaching the end of his life. In Genesis 35:28-29, we read, “Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” This death happened a few years after this statement was made about Shechem. Shechem had shown by his action of raping Dinah that he was following the sinful lifestyle of the nations that lived in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 34:20-24 goes on to say, “And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: These men *are* at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this *condition* will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they *are* circumcised. *Will* not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs *be* ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.’ And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.” Hamor and Shechem returned to their city to talk to the men of the city. They knew that they had to convince the men of their city to be circumcised in order for Shechem to marry Dinah.

They began by telling the men of Shechem that Jacob and his sons were at peace with the men of the city. They had earlier bought the piece of land on which they were living from Hamor. Hamor encouraged the men of the city to let Jacob and his sons live in the land. He also said

they should be allowed to trade in the land. He reminded the men of the city that the land had plenty of room for the family of Jacob. These words show us that Hamor told the men of the city exactly what those men wanted to hear. Hamor and Shechem also told the men of the city that they would be able to take the daughters of Jacob, and his sons, as wives and allow their own daughters to marry the various members of the family of Jacob. Here, we see that Hamor and Shechem wanted to say whatever the men of the city wanted to hear so the men of the city would agree to be circumcised.

Only after telling the men of city of Shechem the benefits they would receive by allowing Jacob and his family to settle near their city, did Hamor and Shechem mention the one requirement the sons of Jacob had mentioned. That was the fact that all of the men of the city be circumcised. They said this requirement was necessary to get Jacob and his sons to agree to live near their city. Then, Hamor and Shechem went on to suggest that the livestock, the property and the animals that presently belonged to Jacob and his sons would become the possession of the people of the city of Shechem. The first trick Satan used to tempt Eve was to tell her about the pleasure she would get from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan never mentioned the long-term consequences of satisfying herself. Here, we see that Shechem used that same trick to convince the men of the city.

Then, Hamor and Shechem suggested, “...Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.” Their suggestion was followed by the men. Genesis 34:2 tells us that Hamor was the prince of the land so the men of the city looked to him as their leader. In addition, we see that Shechem had a strong influence on the men of the city, probably because they considered him an honorable man. As a result, we see that all of the men of the city listened to them. Every male in the city was circumcised. Circumcision causes very little pain to an infant that has recently been born. However, circumcision is very painful for those who are adults, and it takes a period of at least several days to recover and the pain to lessen.

Genesis 34:25-31 says, “Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what *was* in the city and what *was* in the field, and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that *was* in the houses. Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ‘You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I *am* few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I.’ But they said, ‘Should he treat our sister like a harlot?’” Here, we see what happened on the third day. Simeon and Levi came into the city while the men of the city were in great pain and unable to defend themselves. Then, these two brothers took their swords and killed all of the men of the city so that none of the men were left alive.

Simeon and Levi then went to the houses of Hamor and Shechem, killed them and took Dinah from the house of Shechem and returned her to their home on the land that Jacob had purchased from Hamor. Then, the other sons of Jacob also went with Simeon and Levi back into the city

and saw that the men had all been killed because Shechem had defiled their sister. The word translated “plundered” in verses 27 and 29 means *to seize or take all of their possessions*. First, we see that they took their sheep, oxen and donkeys. That included both the animals that were in the city when they came and also those animals that were out in the fields. All of the animals of that city became the possessions of the sons of Jacob. Second, we see that the sons of Jacob took all of the wealth that was in the city. This would have included the gold, silver and anything else in the city that had any value. Third, the brothers started going from house to house and took their young children and wives as captives. Then, they took everything of value that they found in the houses.

Jacob was upset when he heard what had happened, but for the wrong reasons. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land.” The word translated “troubled” means *to disturb or trouble*. The word translated “obnoxious” means *to make something stink or have a bad smell*. By using these words, Jacob told his sons that they had caused trouble for him and made his name like a bad smell. Jacob went on to say that his family was only a small group. Then, he said that the rest of the Canaanites and Perizzites who lived in the land would gather together and come fight against him and his family because the brothers had destroyed the city of Shechem and killed all of the men of that city. Jacob was upset because he expected that he and his entire household would be killed by the people of the land because there were very few of them to fight.

In contrast, Simeon and Levi thought about what Shechem had done to their sister and told their father, “Should he treat our sister like a harlot?” The word translated “harlot” means *to be a prostitute or harlot*. The word translated “treat” means *to make or do*. Shechem had satisfied his own sinful desires by treating a young girl just like she was a prostitute, instead of a young girl who went to get acquainted with the young girls who lived in the city. Genesis 34:1-2 says, “Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her.” Shechem saw her alone, took her and raped her, even though she was probably only about 14 or 15 years old at the time. That is why Simeon and Levi said they had killed all the men of the city. They took revenge into their own hands and killed all of the men with their swords. However, they chose to commit one sin to judge another sin by taking revenge and also destroyed many others in the process.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that rape was already being treated as a very serious offense more than 4,000 years ago. We want to help them learn to explain that rape has consequences that often affect entire extended families for many years. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how this event affected an entire family and an entire city.